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William S Van Allen 04/19/2002 01:23:30 PM From DB/Inbox: William S Van Allen

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TELEGRAM

April 16, 2002

To: ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS - IMMEDIATE
Origin: IRM
From: SECSTATE WASHDC (STATE 71652 - IMMEDIATE)
TAGS: PREL, PINS, AEMR, MARR, CASC, VR
Captions: SENSITIVE
Subject: TFVE01 SITUATION REPORT NO. 005 AS OF 2230 EDT MONDAY,
APRIL 15, 2002
Ref: None

CHAVEZ PROMISES NATIONAL DIALOGUE

1. (SBU) President Chavez spoke to journalists twice announcing the formation of a "Federal Council of Government" to begin a national dialogue with all sectors of society on April 16. Chavez said he hopes to foster a good relationship with the U.S., adding that "misunderstandings" between our two countries have made it difficult to maintain a good relationship. Chavez's remarks were followed by televised interviews with military personnel and opposition leaders, including former president Carmona. (TF/Embassy Caracas telcon, Globovision Caracas, CNN en espanol)

OPPOSITION CTV PARTY HOLDS PRESS CONFERENCE

2. (SBU) CTV leaders in a televised press briefing said they "support democracy and oppose any president who wants to violate it, be it Chavez or Carmona." The National Assembly President also issued a statement that intimidation of journalists must stop. (Embassy Caracas email, Globovision Caracas)

EMBASSY REQUESTS AUTHORIZED DEPARTURE

3. (SBU) The EAC met and requested authorized departure for non-essential personnel and eligible family members. It is estimated that 12-15 people will opt to leave. The decision memo will go forward to M on April 16 OOB. (TF, Embassy Caracas telcon and e-mail)

EMBASSY/AIRLINE UPDATE

4. (SBU) Stores, restaurants and banks appeared open. Ambassador Shapiro reported that additional Guardia Nacional personnel were sent to the embassy following his request to the MOD. Journalists have reported threats, but none have been detained. The Police and National Guard remained in their barracks. American Airlines had two scheduled flights leaving Caracas April 15, and will send three flights a day for the next 10 days. Continental planned one flight late April 15. Delta and United have not yet decided when to resume flights. (TF/Airlines telcons, TF/Embassy Caracas telcon and emails)

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